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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S JUDICIAL SYSTEM, APEC

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their November 26 news coverage on the economic predicament of the world and of Taiwan; and on the probe into former President Chen Shui-bian's alleged corruption. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" criticized the KMT administration for using the judiciary as a political tool to beat down on the DPP members. The article cited AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young's remarks in his press conference held in mid November as saying that Young "barely" concealed "his criticism of the way the case is being handled." An op-ed in the pro-unification "United Daily News" discussed cross-Straits relations and the APEC summit held in Lima, Peru, lately and called on the Ma Ying-jeou administration to attach great importance to balance among the KMT, the DPP, the Chinese Communist Party and the United States. End summary.

12. Taiwan's Judicial System

"Using the Judiciary as a Political Tool"

Chin Heng-wei, editor-in-chief of Contemporary Monthly, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/25):

"Over the past few weeks, people have been shocked to see Taiwan's judicial institutions playing fast and free with the law and the Constitution. The legal bureaucrats' shoddy and shameful actions have struck at the very foundation of democracy and the rule of law, and the creaks and groans emanating from the rotten Judicial Yuan seem to forebode the arrival of a new era of martial law. ... From Chiayi County Commissioner Chen Ming-wen and [Yunlin County Magistrate] Su to Chen Shui-bian, a climate of political character assassination is brewing. Is every prosecutor in Taiwan going to sink into this mire? ..."

"Speaking at a press conference following Chen Shui-bian's detention, American Institute in Taiwan Director Stephen Young said that the judicial process in Chen's case must be 'transparent, fair and impartial' - repeating the phrase no less than three times, and stressing that this was 'very important.' Barely concealing his criticism of the way the case is being handled, Young said with a hint of sarcasm: 'I know that Taiwan's legal system, just as America's, views everyone as innocent until proven guilty' and cautioned that 'it is important to build confidence in the judicial system and the criminal justice system.' Ma and his government have already set Taiwan on the path toward the restoration of martial law, and only the public can stop them. ..."

13. APEC

"Warning Signals from APEC: Ma Ying-jeou Should Attach Great Importance to Balance among the Four Sides"

Jung Fu-tien, a veteran journalist and part-time assistant professor at Yuan Ze University, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (11/26):

"The curtain for this year's APEC leaders' summit has fallen. This is the first international activity that both sides of the Taiwan Strait have attended on an equal footing since reconciliation across the Taiwan Strait began. [Because of it,] Taiwan's visibility in the international community has been greatly enhanced, but still, mainland China has a strict framework set for Taiwan's international participation. The ambiguity that the Ma Ying-jeou administration has expected regarding this aspect has yet to emerge. The KMT administration's reconciliatory policy across the Taiwan Strait is doomed to face more severe challenges. ...

"Over the past six months, there has always been a blind spot in the efforts of President Ma's national security team when pushing for talks across the Taiwan Strait -- namely, they believe that U.S. support is essential for [improving] cross-Strait relations and that it is important to maintain balance among the United States, China and Taiwan. But these people overlooked the factor of the DPP. While Beijing insists that cross-Strait relations are relations between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), cross-Strait relations will no longer merely concern the balance among Taiwan, the United States and China but balance among the four sides -- the KMT, the CCP, the DPP and the United States. The clashes that happened in Taipei during [China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait Chairman] Chen Yunlin's recent visit have reflected this fact. ..."

YOUNG